

# Memorandum

**TO:** TRANSPORTATION AND  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** James R. Helmer

**SUBJECT: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION  
ACTIVITIES REPORT**

**DATE:** 02-18-09

Approved

Date

2/19/09

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report and presentation on the status of various regional transportation projects and programs of interest to the City of San José.

## BACKGROUND

The Transportation and Environment Committee work plan includes the presentation of quarterly reports on current activities related to projects and programs of significance involving the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrans, the California High Speed Rail Authority, the County of Santa Clara, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. This report includes an overview of key topic areas. Staff will be available at the meeting to discuss these and other items of interest to the Committee. For the March 2nd meeting, topics expected to be addressed in the Regional Transportation Activities Report include the following:

- Economic Stimulus – On February 17<sup>th</sup>, President Obama signed the \$787 billion federal economic stimulus bill referred to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). With respect to transportation infrastructure investments in San José and Santa Clara County, the selection of projects and funding amounts will be determined based on actions by the State and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Local projects likely to be funded are City street pavement maintenance and VTA acquisition of hybrid buses.
- BART – Over the next 3 months the VTA Board is scheduled to discuss and decide on an implementation strategy for the BART extension to San José/Silicon Valley. The strategy (referred to as the Measure A Expenditure Plan) will include a comprehensive review of all projects in the 2000 Measure A Transit Program. At this time, VTA is focused on completing the federal environmental document by the end of 2009, with a Record of Decision by 2010. In addition, VTA is strategically aligning the project to improve its competitiveness for funding under the federal New Rail Starts Program.

The project design is being held at 65% completion and will likely restart in the mid-2010 timeframe. This brief hiatus provides the City with additional time to develop new

approaches to securing the City's preferred station portal location at the Bank of America building.

- Diridon Station Area Development/Harvard Design Studio – The City of San José has entered into an agreement with the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) to create “visionary” urban design concepts for the Diridon Station and its adjacent surroundings. The project, “New Ways: San José/Silicon Valley,” will offer a creative vision for the station expansion, and complement other planning efforts, to include the Diridon Station Area Development Study, taking place in preparation for the start of California's new high-speed rail and future BART service. Headed by Dr. Rodolfo Machado, professor in Practice of Architecture and Urban Design at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 12 Harvard graduate students will formulate innovative views of a next generation transit station and adjacent land uses. Past Harvard GSD design studios in urban planning and architecture have included projects around the globe, in such places as Dubai, Moscow, Budapest, Seoul, Buenos Aires and Bilbao.
- California High Speed Rail – On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the High Speed Rail Authority conducted the last of a series of environmental scoping meetings at the Santa Clara Convention Center. The scoping meeting was intended to solicit input on the San José to San Francisco segment of the corridor. Earlier in the month, the Authority had conducted similar meetings in both San Carlos and San Francisco. Scoping meetings are currently being planned for the segment of the corridor from San José to Merced. These meeting are tentatively scheduled for March 2009. The project consultant teams are targeting completion of a project level environmental analysis and securing of a Record of Decision by the end of 2011.

On December 18, 2008, the City's Department of Transportation facilitated a day long workshop with the Authority's consultant teams and City staff who expect some involvement with the High Speed Rail project. DOT staff has also begun involving the consultant teams with the Council offices, neighborhoods and community leaders which may be affected by the development of the High Speed Rail project.

- 880/Stevens Creek Interchange – On January 28, 2009, VTA sponsored an Environmental Scoping Meeting for the I-280/I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard Improvement Project. Representatives from the City's Department of Transportation, Caltrans and the project consultant team participated in the meeting. The intent of the scoping meeting was to solicit input from the community on issues that should be addressed in the project's environmental document. Approximately 150 people attended the meeting that was held at the O'Connor Hospital Auditorium. Most comments supported the project's strategies to improve traffic flow. Bike and pedestrian circulation were also key topics.

The project consists of three key elements; reconfiguring the Stevens Creek interchange, providing a direct connector from Northbound I-280 to northbound I-880, and a new off ramp from northbound I-280 to Winchester Boulevard. At an estimated cost of \$130 - \$150

million, the project is likely to be constructed in phases, with improvements on the westerly side of the interchange and widening Stevens Creek Boulevard over I-880 being considered as the first phase.

In terms of project schedule, it is expected that the draft environmental document will be circulated for public review and comment in the summer of 2009 with final approval of the document in early 2010. The initial phase of construction could start toward the later half of 2010, subject to available funding.

- VTP 2035 – In January, the VTA Board adopted the updated 30-year transportation master plan for Santa Clara County, known as Valley Transportation Plan 2035. The plan includes a \$15 billion transportation investment strategy to support the growth, mobility, and vitality of the South Bay region. The following table lists the VTP 2035 projects identified as near-term priorities for San Jose based on past Council actions and investments in project development.

#### Valley Transportation Plan 2035 – San Jose Priority Projects

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Transit Projects</u><br/> BART Extension to San José<br/> Santa Clara/Alum Rock BRT<br/> Capitol LRT Extension to Eastridge<br/> Airport Area Automated People Mover<br/> California High Speed Rail<br/> Diridon Station Expansion</p> <p><u>Freeway/Expressway Projects</u><br/> Route 101/Tully Upgrade (Funded)<br/> Route 880 HOV Lanes: N. San José (Funded)<br/> Route 280/880/Stevens Creek Upgrade<br/> Route 101/Capital/Yerba Buena Upgrade<br/> Route 101/Trimble Interchange Upgrade<br/> Route 85 Express Lanes<br/> Montague Expressway Improvements<br/> Route 101/Zanker Interchange<br/> Route 101/Oakland Rd Upgrade<br/> Route 101/Mabury Interchange<br/> Route 101/Blossom Hill Upgrade</p> | <p><u>Local Street Projects</u><br/> San Jose Traffic Signal Upgrades (Funded)<br/> San Jose Traffic Management Center (Funded)<br/> Pavement Maintenance<br/> Downtown Couplet Conversions<br/> Autumn Parkway Extension<br/> Coleman Ave Widening: 880 to Autumn<br/> Charcot Overcrossing: at 880<br/> Branham Lane: 87 to Monterey</p> <p><u>Bikeway Projects</u><br/> Blossom Hill/Monterey Overcrossing (Funded)<br/> Guadalupe River Trail: 880 to Montague (Funded)<br/> Almaden Expwy Overcrossing: Near Coleman<br/> Coyote Creek Trail: 237 to Kelley Park<br/> Guadalupe River Trail: Alviso to Montague<br/> Los Gatos Creek Trail: Downtown Area<br/> Willow Glen Spur Trail<br/> Thompson Creek Trail<br/> Citywide On-Street Bikeways</p> |
|---|---|

Note: Projects are not listed in priority order

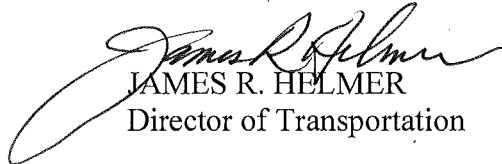
TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

02-18-09

**Subject:** Regional Transportation Activities Report

Page 4

- Route 87 Ramp Metering – On January 23, 2009, Caltrans issued a press release that announced the activation of ramp meters along the State Route (SR) 85 corridor. Long recognized as a means to reduce commute travel times and widely supported by local commuters, the activation of the ramp meters on SR 85 joins SR 87 and Route 101 on a unique list of freeway corridors where ramp metering equipment was installed but never activated. Sponsored by a \$2 million grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, recently activated ramp meters include southbound SR 85 from Almaden to Cottle Rd. and northbound SR 87 from Julian to Route 101. Project completion is expected in mid-2009 with the activation of ramp metering on southbound Route 101 from Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto to De La Cruz Blvd. in San José.



JAMES R. HELMER  
Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Hans Larsen, Deputy Director, at 535-3835.